Utilization of Research Databases subscribed by the Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh

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ABSTRACT
This paper aims at evaluating the usage of major research databases by researchers subscribed by the Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh. The study is based on survey method to know the frequency of using the online databases, users' opinion about the subscribed databases on satisfaction of their needs, importance of the subscribed databases in research work, continuation of subscribed databases and various difficulties being faced by researchers while accessing the online data bases. Investigators have administered a total of 150 questionnaires among researchers, out of which 100 were completed and returned back showing an overall response rate of 66.67%. The result of the study reveals that 42% of researchers use subscribed online databases weekly followed by daily (40%), however, the major proportion of respondents (43%) strongly agree that the online databases subscribed by Maulana Azad Library fulfilled their needs and library should subscribe some more databases. Overall, 95% of researchers need some more databases other than the subscribed databases for their research work. Almost 99% researchers think that the library should continue the subscription of the four databases i.e. EBSCOHOST: Academic Search Complete, India Stat, Pro Quest: Theses & Dissertations and Scopus. Lack of searching skills is reported as a main problem by 60% researchers in accessing and using online databases. In the end, the study has given some suggestions for maximum use of online databases subscribed in Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh.

KeyTerms: Online Databases, Maulana Azad Library, Aligarh Muslim University, Research Database

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INTRODUCTION
The recent trends in information and communication technologies (ICTs) have largely affected the nature of library collections resulting in adoption of the electronic information resources which are increasingly becoming an integral part of libraries' holdings. Now, online databases are being offered by the university libraries for their users through Internet. Khan & Haridasan viewed that "the most prominent information service offered by ICTs is the database oriented service". The introduction of online databases in libraries have greatly improved the efficiency of its services and brought out the recently published information sources in a more convenient and easy to use format to users. Thus, within a short span of time, online databases have become an important information source for libraries to support learning and research activities".

Online databases offer facility to search for up to the minute published scholarly literature available in different subject areas. One of the key benefits of using an online database is that it is much easier to search lots of journals simultaneously for articles on a particular topic rather than to search through journals individually. Singh & Nhunng opined that online database "is a valuable and up to date source of information, therefore it is indispensable to the learning, teaching and investigating for the university communities". The resources accessed or searched through subscribed databases are academically more reliable than discovered by the use of Google or other search engines.
Rice defines online database as a "machine-readable file of organized information with which the user interacts by means of a terminal connected to the computer housing the file. The terminal may be wired directly to the computer or it may communicate with it via a telecommunications network".

According to Vincini the term online database is defined as a "database that is accessible via a network and sometimes via a Web interface. Databases in general are organized collections of data. Individual records within the database store information of a particular type, including defined fields of descriptive data for each record. Particular tables of information within the database can be associated with other tables of information, forming a relational database".

- **Major Databases Subscribed by Aligarh Muslim University**

The Aligarh Muslim University accredited by NAAC in ‘A’ grade has been adjudged as the India’s number two higher education university by Times Higher Education Asia University Ranking 2015. The Maulana Azad Library of Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh is one of the largest university libraries of India which provides campus wide access to subscribed electronic information resources to its users through a well-equipped computer lab. As online databases are important information source for research activities, the university library also subscribes four popular databases namely EBSCOHOST: Academic Search Complete, IndiaStat, and ProQuest: Theses & Dissertations and Scopus.

- **EBSCOHOST**

EBSCOHOST is a service that provides full text and abstract level databases of many information providers and prominent publishers covering a wide range of subjects. It covers general to specialized databases to academic, corporate, public and other libraries. EBSCOhost offers basic and advanced searching based on Boolean logic, enhanced subject indexing and journal searching which can be customized.

- **IndiaStat.com**

IndiaStat.com is a platform of Data net India Pvt. Ltd. which provides secondary level statistical information based on socio-economic data of India on state, region and sector level. It gathers information from various associated regional websites on agriculture, demography, environment, education, industry, infrastructure, health, labour & workforce, law & crime and social welfare schemes etc. Researchers and students can easily access the data on these parameters for research study, review and reference purpose as per their need and discretion.

- **ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Database**

ProQuest Dissertations & Theses (PQDT) database provides more than 3 million records. It is the official repository for the Library of Congress and the publishing partner of the National Library of Canada. It offers more than 3 million full text citations to dissertations & theses from 1861 to present day submitted in various universities/institutes in the world. Out of which 1 million dissertations can be downloaded in pdf format. The database covers subjects from arts, business, education, humanities and social science to interdisciplinary natural and physical sciences like agriculture, architecture, biological sciences, engineering, environmental sciences, geosciences, health and medical sciences, mathematical and physical sciences.

- **Scopus**

Scopus, platform from Elsevier, is a bibliographic database containing abstract and citations of academic journal articles. It provides access to nearly 22,000 titles from over 5,000 publishers which includes peer-reviewed journals in the science, medical and social sciences including arts and humanities. Scopus also provides author profiles which covers affiliations, number of publications each author and their biographic data, references and details on the number of citations each published document of the particular author has received. It has alerting features that allows registered users to track changes to a profile and a facility to calculate authors’ h-index.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

Khan & Haridasan conducted a study to examine the use of online databases in the Faculty of Arts at Aligarh Muslim University and University of Delhi. The study found that 62.06% faculty members of Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) are just aware about the availability of online resources in AMU while 66.86% research scholars and 79.88% post graduate students are slightly aware. However, in DU, the awareness level is high in faculty members (86.11%) than post graduate students (42.85%) and research scholar (41.52%) which also showed that users of DU are more aware than AMU of availability of online databases. They also concluded that 100% of the faculty members of AMU use online databases for teaching purpose while in DU 100% research scholars used databases for their research work. The study also showed that users of DU are more satisfied than users of AMU with the availability of online databases. In the end, the study concludes with some suggestions to maximize the utilization of online databases among library users.

The study conducted by Stewart, Narendra & Schmetzke attempts to measure the use of online databases among people using adaptive software to interface with computers. The study found that all databases were technologically compatible with the adaptive software except Micromedex and Scifinder Scholar Access. The study provides some guidelines to database interface developers to add more intuitive features in their databases.

Swamy & Kishore examine the use pattern of online databases by Post Graduate Diploma in Management (PGDM) students of Institute for Financial Management and Research (IFMR), Chennai. Among 227 users, 87.66% of them are aware of online databases and majority of users use them for reference purpose in their research work and studies with the high level of usefulness and utilization.

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library staff, however, 29.14% and 23.61% respondents reported some other problems as how to use online databases and unfamiliarity with search methods respectively. Upadhyay & Chakraborty conducted a study to examine the use and awareness of online journals and databases among faculty members of I.T., B.H.U. The study depicts 31.25% respondents use subscribed online databases once a week. Overall 43.75% respondents have average satisfaction with content, coverage and availability of online database. Majority of respondents (59.37%) prefer online database to print.

**OBJECTIVES**

- To examine the frequency of using major research databases by the researchers subscribed by Maulana Azad Library, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh.
- To know users opinion about the subscribed databases on satisfaction of their needs.
- To find out users views regarding importance of subscribed databases for research work.
- To know users opinion regarding the continuation of subscribed databases.
- To identify various difficulties being faced by researchers while using online databases.

**METHODOLOGY**

The present study is based on questionnaire method for collecting comprehensive and relevant data. The questionnaires were personally distributed to researcher who regularly visited online computer lab in the library. In addition to the personal distribution, questionnaires were also administered through e-mail to obtain responses of the registered researchers in the university. The online questionnaire was prepared using Google Docs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode of Distribution of Questionnaire</th>
<th>Questionnaire Administered</th>
<th>Questionnaire Received</th>
<th>Questionnaire Analyzed (%age)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Print</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30 (60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>70 (70)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100 (66.67)</td>
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The investigators administered a total of 50 printed questionnaires to the researchers. In addition to this, 100 researchers were approached through e-mail. Out of 50 printed questionnaires administered to researchers, 30 participated in the survey. Hence the response rate is 60%. Apart from this, out of 100, 70 researchers participated in the online survey; hence the response rate is 70%. Table 1 shows that a total of 100 (66.67%) respondents participated in the survey.

**DATA ANALYSIS**

The manually collected data has been entered into the numerically coded MS-Excel spreadsheet and data collected through online questionnaire were downloaded from Google Docs site into the Excel spreadsheet. The data have been organized, analyzed, compared, consolidated, tabulated and interpreted by using tables and percentages. The analysis of the data received from the online database users are discussed below.

- **Frequency of Using Online Databases**

To get tendency in the frequency of using four popular databases which are being subscribed by library, respondents were asked to mention their frequency of using online databases. Figure 1 reveals that 42% respondents use weekly followed by 40% use subscribed online databases daily. 15% use monthly/sometimes however there is a minor group (3%) who use online databases whenever needed.

![Fig. 1: Frequency of Using Online Databases](image)

- **Users Opinion on Satisfaction of Their Needs and Subscription of Some More Databases**

In this portion of questionnaire, users were asked to provide their views on a four point scale i.e. strongly agree, agree, partially agree and disagree regarding satisfaction of their needs with the currently subscribed databases and subscription of some more databases. In reference to the above, Figure 2 reflects that majority of researchers i.e. 43% respondents strongly agree that online databases subscribed by Maulana Azad Library fulfilled their needs as well as library should subscribe some more databases. However, 34% and 18% respondents respectively agree and partially agree with this statement. Whilst a very low percentage of users i.e. 5% researchers opine that online databases subscribed by the library does not fulfill their need. Overall 95% of researchers agreed with the statement and they need some more databases other than the subscribed databases for their research work.

![Fig. 2: Users Opinion on Satisfaction of Their Needs](image)

- **Importance of Subscribed Databases for Research Work**

In order to find out utility of subscribed online databases on research work, the respondents were asked for the same and their responses are presented in Figure 3. It reveals that 42%...
researchers strongly agree with the importance of subscribed databases which are very essential for their research work. A total of 37% respondents agree while 15% partially agree that subscribed databases are very essential for supporting their research work. At the same time very few respondents i.e. 6% researchers feel that subscribed databases are not important for their research work. Taken as a whole, 94% researchers believe that subscribed online databases are very essential for their research work.

![Fig. 3: Importance of Subscribed Databases for Research Work](image)

- **User’s Opinion Regarding Continuous Subscription of Databases**

The opinion of the researchers regarding the continuous subscription of the mentioned online databases has been presented in Figure 4. About 56% respondents strongly agree that library should continue the subscription of all the four major online databases (EBSCOHOST: Academic Search Complete, IndiaStat, ProQuest: Theses & Dissertations and Scopus). About 40% respondents expressed that they are agreed with the statement. Whilst the remaining 3% and 1% respondents respectively did not hesitate to state that they partially agree and disagree with the statement. On the whole 99% researchers think that the library should continue the subscription of the four databases.

![Fig. 4: User’s Opinion Regarding Continuous Subscription of Databases](image)

- **Problems Faced by Researchers While Accessing Online Databases**

The respondents were asked to furnish the problems being faced by them in accessing and using online databases. Figure 5 indicates that majority of users (60%) report lack of searching skills followed by lack of awareness (50%) as major problems while they are accessing and using online databases. 39% respondents stated lack of infrastructure. Lack of support from library staff is reported as another problem by 30% respondents whilst 24% researchers are facing problem due to slow internet speed.

![Fig. 5: Problems Faced by Researchers](image)

**FINDINGS**

- Majority of respondents i.e. 42% researchers use subscribed online databases weekly followed by daily (40%).
- Major proportion of respondents (43%) strongly agree that online databases subscribed by Maulana Azad Library fulfilled their needs as well as library should subscribe some more databases. However, 34% and 18% respondents respectively agree and partially agree with this statement. Overall 95% of researchers are agreed with the statement as well as they need some more databases other than the subscribed databases for their research work.
- Majority of users (42%) strongly agree with the importance of subscribed databases which are very essential for their research work. However, a total of 37% respondents agree while 15% partially agree that subscribed databases are required for their research work. Taken as a whole, 94% researchers believe that subscribed online databases are very essential for their research work.
- More than half of the respondents (56%) strongly agree that library should continue the subscription of all the four major online databases (EBSCOHOST: Academic Search Complete, IndiaStat, ProQuest: Theses & Dissertations and Scopus). However a good number of online database users (40%) expressed that they are agree with the statement. On the whole almost 99% researchers think that the library should continue the subscription of the four databases.
- A good percentage of users (60%) report lack of searching skills as a main problem in accessing and using subscribed online databases. While lack of awareness is stated as another major problem by 50% of respondents.

**SUGGESTIONS**

- The library should subscribe some more popular databases in the subject areas of arts and social sciences.
- Library should encourage their users to use subscribed online databases. Also the researcher should know that what databases are available in the library. In this regard awareness program about online databases, its scope and merits should be regularly conducted for library users.
It is suggested that proper training for accessing and searching online databases should be provided to researchers as well as library staff.

CONCLUSION
The study examines the users responses regarding continuation of four popular databases (EBSCOHOST: Academic Search Complete, IndiaStat, ProQuest: Theses & Dissertations and Scopus) which are being subscribed by Maulana Azad Library, AMU, Aligarh. As Maulana Azad Library provides access to major online databases to their users, it is contributing significantly in research activities of the university. The study reveals that the online databases subscribed by library are very essential for research. The subscribed databases have fulfilled users’ needs as well as researchers opined that library should subscribe some more databases. At the same time almost 99% respondents think that the library should continue the subscription of the four databases. However, a few users report some hurdles faced by them while accessing and searching online databases like lack of searching skills, lack of awareness and lack of infrastructure etc. Online databases with their meta search functionality provide gateway to valuable scholarly literature, as a result gain popularity among researchers.

REFERENCES